

Biography

Lothar Krappmann

Lothar Krappmann was a member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child from 2003 to 2011, and from 2007 the rapporteur of the Committee.

During his time of membership Lothar was responsible for the review of child-rights implementation in more than twenty countries and belonged to the editorial group of several General Comments of the Committee on articles of the Convention. Lothar strongly supported the Committee's decision to publish a comment on the child's right to play.

Until his retirement Lothar was a senior researcher at the Max Planck Institute of Human Development in Berlin (Germany). His main field of interest and research was, and is, the social, emotional, and moral development of children in family, school, and day care institutions. He paid special interest to vulnerable groups of children, particularly children growing up in poverty. Lothar is involved in a number of activities and programmes promoting citizenship, education and children's participation and served on advisory boards to research institutions, social welfare organisations, and governmental agencies.



Lothar studied Sociology, Philosophy, and Modern History at the universities of Frankfurt a. M. and Cologne, and took his doctorate in Sociology at the Freie Universität Berlin where he still teaches.

1:30pm

Synopsis

Lothar Krappmann will first explain the monitoring mandate given to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child by 193 State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. By their ratification of this treaty the States have agreed to ensure fundamental rights of children, including the right to survival, development, protection, education and participation and among them also the right to play (article 31 of the Convention).

The presentation will then report that this right is often addressed in the review processes of child-rights implementation. However, the Committee has learned that the right to play is often not well understood by governments who tend to promote organised and supervised activities and are not aware of the child's right to self-organised, explorative, sometimes subversive, joyful and exciting activities, which belong to the most important aspects of human life, to which children are entitled irrespective of all functional benefits which may emerge from playful activities.

Such observations stimulate the Committee to write General Comments explaining what articles of the Convention ask for. Consequently in its 56th session the Committee has decided to write and adopt a General Comment on this essential right of all children in order to attract more awareness of this article, to enhance the understanding of this right and to help governments to fully implement this right. The General Comment will also give advice to the State Parties on how to report on their endeavours of promoting children's play activities, so that a more thorough and targeted debate on this issue is possible.

The presentation will further outline, in which way such a General Comment is developed in order to make clear that organisations dedicated to the promotion of children's play can contribute to the production process. It will be explained that these organisations can also help to substantiate the Committee's reviews by providing relevant, in particular country-specific information, for the debate with governments and the recommendations issued after the dialogue.